

At The Swimming Pool - What Can You Do To Crypto?

You may be asking yourself, “What is Cryptosporidiosis anyway?” Cryptosporidiosis or “crypto” is a disease that causes severe watery diarrhea and can last for two weeks or more. The microscopic parasite that causes crypto lives in the intestine of the infected person.

Up to a billion crypto germs can be released in a single bowel movement (watery diarrhea). So imagine if someone infected with crypto goes swimming, and then has an accident in the swimming pool. That’s right, 1,000,000,000 (1-billion) crypto germs are now in the pool.

You might say, “Well, not a big deal – the chlorine will kill the crypto germs, right?” Not exactly! Crypto can live in a chlorinated pool for several days. Guess what? It only takes getting a few germs in your mouth to make you sick.

Now imagine spending the next two weeks with explosive diarrhea that comes and goes with absolutely no warning. You can’t go anywhere because you don’t know when the diarrhea might hit, and when it hits there is nothing you can do about it.

You become dehydrated from all the fluid you are losing due to the diarrhea. You suffer from unbearable stomach cramps and pains. You feel horrible and have a mountain of soiled underwear, clothes, and linens that need to be washed.

Your life for the next two weeks is downright awful! All this just because of a few crypto germs you swallowed at the pool.

Crypto is very contagious. You maybe asking yourself, “Is there anything I can do to protect myself, my family, and others from becoming infected with crypto?” Yes!

First, it is important to understand that crypto is spread when water or other surfaces become contaminated with feces from an infected person or animal. A person then accidentally swallows contaminated water or puts something in his or her mouth that is contaminated and becomes infected.

To prevent becoming infected with crypto, follow these tips:

- Wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet, changing a diaper, and before eating or preparing food.
- Do not swim if you have diarrhea and wait two weeks after diarrhea has stopped before swimming.
- When swimming, do not swallow the water and avoid getting water in your mouth.
- Take a shower with soap and water before swimming. Make sure to clean your bottom. The small amounts of fecal material left on your bottom after using the toilet will wash off in the pool if not washed off before getting into the pool.
- Take frequent bathroom breaks while swimming and make sure small children do the same.

Cryptosporidiosis – Short Article

- Change diapers in the bathroom, and not at the pool side.
- After changing a diaper, wash your hands and your child's bottom thoroughly with soap and water.
- If you or your child have a fecal accident in the pool – report it immediately.

If you have any questions about cryptosporidiosis, or if you would just like more information on how to prevent it, contact your local health department or visit <http://health.utah.gov/epi/>